

States and around the globe to compete to become the Champion of the Atlantic Coast. The event has steadily grown over the years and now brings a host of festivities to the Virginia Beach oceanfront, such as live music, skating, and beach volleyball.

It is an honor to celebrate the long-running success of the ECSC, a staple in our Coastal Virginia community. I am grateful for the ECSC's significant contributions to our local economy and culture, and I wish the competition and all its participants the best of luck in this year's event.

CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF
SPEERS BOROUGH MAYOR WIL-
LIAM LEE

HON. GUY RESCHENTHALER

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, August 10, 2021

Mr. RESCHENTHALER. Madam Speaker, I rise to celebrate the life of Speers Borough Mayor William "Bill" Lee, who passed away on December 18, 2020, at the age of 75. As a lifetime resident of the Mon-Valley, Bill will always be remembered for his commitment to his community, region, and country.

After graduating from California State College in 1967, Bill's amiability led him to a career in sales and in 1980, he joined his cousins at Lee Supply Company. With their rollout of HDPE pipe in the 1970s, Lee Supply Co. had become one of the largest suppliers of pipe and pumping systems for the eastern United States. As environmental sales manager, he was fondly known as "Land Fill Bill." He retired in 2013 but remained active to mentor the next generation and represent Lee Supply Co. at trade shows.

Throughout his life, Mayor Lee's dedication to his community was clear. He served on the Mon Valley Progress Council, Charleroi Area Board of Education, the Water Authority Board of Charleroi and as chairman of the Charleroi Regional Police Department. Most remarkably, Bill served as Speers Borough mayor for more than twenty years.

Beyond public service, Bill was a pillar of his community. At St. Andrew of the Apostle, his booming voice was the first to lead parishioners in song. As the president of the Mon Valley Ancient Order of Hibernians, he sang his way through 40 years at the Pittsburgh St. Patrick Day parades, receiving many awards for singing "Molly Malone." Bill was also well known for his impromptu but enthusiastic renditions of "God Bless America." As a Meals on Wheels delivery man, he treated everyone with dignity and made their week brighter.

Madam Speaker, it is with profound sadness that I recognize the loss of Mayor William "Bill" Lee. Bill's outstanding legacy of service will have a lasting impact and he will be greatly missed by his family, friends, and community.

COMMEMORATING 56TH ANNIVER-
SARY OF THE VOTING RIGHTS
ACT OF 1965

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, August 10, 2021

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Madam Speaker, I rise today not just to commemorate the landmark achievement of 56 years ago but to inform our colleagues and the nation of the need to redouble and rededicate our efforts to the work that remains to be done to protect the right of all Americans to vote free from discrimination and the injustices that prevent them from exercising this most fundamental right of citizenship.

On August 6, 1965, in the rotunda of the Capitol and in the presence of such luminaries as the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Rev. Ralph Abernathy of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference; Roy Wilkins of the NAACP; Whitney Young of the National Urban League; James Foreman of the Congress of Racial Equality; A. Philip Randolph of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters; John Lewis of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee; Senators Robert Kennedy, Hubert Humphrey, and Everett Dirksen; President Johnson addressed the nation before signing the Voting Rights Act:

"The vote is the most powerful instrument ever devised by man for breaking down injustice and destroying the terrible walls which imprison men because they are different from other men."

The Voting Rights Act of 1965 was critical to preventing brazen voter discrimination violations that historically left millions of African Americans disenfranchised. In 1940, for example, there were less than 30,000 African Americans registered to vote in Texas and only about 3 percent of African Americans living in the south were registered to vote. Poll taxes, literacy tests, and threats of violence were the major causes of these racially discriminatory results. After passage of the Voting Rights Act in 1965, which prohibited these discriminatory practices, registration and electoral participation steadily increased to the point that by 2012, more than 1.2 million African Americans living in Texas were registered to vote.

In 1964, the year before the Voting Rights Act became law, there were approximately 300 African Americans in public office, including just three in Congress. Few, if any, African Americans held elective office anywhere in the south. Because of the Voting Rights Act, today there are more than 9,100 black elected officials, including 46 members of Congress, the largest number ever. Because of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 signed into law by President Lyndon Johnson on this day 53 years ago, I stand before you as the first African American woman Ranking Member of the House Judiciary Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, Homeland Security, and Investigations.

Madam Speaker, the Voting Rights Act opened the political process for many of the approximately 6,000 Hispanic public officials that have been elected and appointed nationwide, including more than 275 at the state or federal level, 32 of whom serve in Congress. Native Americans, Asians, and others who have historically encountered harsh barriers to full political participation also have benefited

greatly. The crown jewel of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 is Section 5, which requires that states and localities with a chronic record of discrimination in voting practices secure federal approval before making any changes to voting processes. Section 5 protects minority voting rights where voter discrimination has historically been the worst.

Since 1982, Section 5 has stopped more than 1,000 discriminatory voting changes in their tracks, including 107 discriminatory changes right here in Texas. And it is a source of eternal pride to all of us in Houston that in pursuit of extending the full measure of citizenship to all Americans, in 1975 Congresswoman Barbara Jordan, who also represented this historic 18th Congressional District of Texas, introduced, and the Congress adopted, what are now Sections 4(f)(3) and 4(f)(4) of the Voting Rights Act, which extended the protections of Section 4(a) and Section 5 to language minorities. During the floor debate on the 1975 reauthorization of the Voting Rights Act, Congresswoman Jordan explained why this reform was needed:

"There are Mexican-American people in the State of Texas who have been denied the right to vote; who have been impeded in their efforts to register and vote; who have not had encouragement from those election officials because they are brown people.

"So, the state of Texas, if we approve this measure, would be brought within the coverage of this Act for the first time."

When it comes to extending and protecting the precious right to vote, the Lone Star State, the home state of Lyndon Johnson and Barbara Jordan, can be the leading state in the Union, one that sets the example for the nation. But to realize that future, we must turn from and not return to the dark days of the past. We must remain ever vigilant and oppose all schemes that will abridge or dilute the precious right to vote. Madam Speaker, I am here today to remind the nation that the right to vote, that "powerful instrument that can break down the walls of injustice," is facing grave threats.

The threat stems from the decision issued in June 2013 by the Supreme Court in *Shelby County v. Holder*, 570 U.S. 193 (2013), which invalidated Section 4(b) of the VRA, and paralyzed the application of the VRA's Section 5 preclearance requirements. According to the Supreme Court majority, the reason for striking down Section 4(b) was that "times change." Now, the Court was right; times have changed. But what the Court did not fully appreciate is that the positive changes it cited are due almost entirely to the existence and vigorous enforcement of the Voting Rights Act. And that is why the Voting Rights Act is still needed. Let me put it this way: in the same way that the vaccine invented by Dr. Jonas Salk in 1953 eradicated the crippling effects but did not eliminate the cause of polio, the Voting Rights Act succeeded in stymieing the practices that resulted in the wholesale disenfranchisement of African Americans and language minorities but did eliminate them entirely.

The Voting Rights Act is needed as much today to prevent another epidemic of voting disenfranchisement as Dr. Salk's vaccine is still needed to prevent another polio epidemic. However, officials in some states, notably Texas and North Carolina, seemed to regard the *Shelby* decision as a green light and